

**TOWN COUNCIL
WORKSHOP
MARCH 4, 2002**

The meeting was called to order at 5:43 p.m. Present were: Mayor Venis, Vice-Mayor Paul, Councilmembers Starkey and Truex, Town Administrator Willi, Town Attorney Kiar and Town Clerk Muniz recording the meeting. Councilmember Clark was absent.

Councilmember Starkey stated that she was approached by a resident who said the proposed bridge would be in their front yard on Orange Drive and there was also concern that the bridge would destroy the Live Oak canopy. She advised that a meeting was held regarding this issue, where 35 residents attended and the consensus was that there should be no bridge. Councilmember Starkey stated that Cooper City, United Ranches, and Southwest Ranches were invited because the bridge could impact their communities as well.

James Ford, representing the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), explained that what was proposed was part of the reconstruction of Griffin Road. He explained that the purpose of the bridges was to alleviate the traffic congestion at the intersections and to have east-west access. Mr. Ford stated that a traffic study was done to determine what impact would be made if the intersection at Orange Drive and Nob Hill Road was left open. It was determined that this intersection was to remain open, as "it would not have a significant impact on the operation between Griffin Road and Nob Hill Road." He stated that FDOT had made the commitment to build the bridge, but this was being reconsidered due to the recent requests. Mr. Ford spoke of the criteria used to determine the location of the bridge, which did not line up with a residential driveway or a commercial driveway on either side. He stated that if the bridge was built, there would be a signal to allow access to and from the bridge.

Mr. Ford referred to a FDOT handout which showed the proposed design without the bridge and the impact on traffic patterns there would be on Griffin Road and Orange Drive. He stated that the only movement that would not be changed was the left turn movement from Nob Hill Road, as it was going to be eliminated to accommodate a second left turn lane from southbound Nob Hill Road to Griffin Road. Mr. Ford further described the various options and the impacts the bridge would have.

Mr. Ford stated that the bridge west of Pine Island Road would alleviate the traffic at Nob Hill Road, as it would allow access to Orange Drive westbound. He referred to the traffic on Orange Drive during peak hours and stated that once expanded, commuters would use Griffin Road rather than Orange Drive.

Mr. Ford stated that the "letting" was scheduled for February 2003, and the plans were to be completed by September 2002. He clarified that FDOT was either entertaining a bridge or no bridge, but relocation was not an option.

Councilmember Starkey asked if there would be the ability to go east-west on Orange Drive. Mr. Ford replied affirmatively.

Cooper City Manager Chris Farrell read a prepared statement on behalf of Cooper City, which expressed that this bridge was probably not in the overall interest of FDOT. He felt that FDOT probably had enough data to warrant these bridges and reminded that the bridge originally proposed for Hiatus Road was abandoned. Mr. Farrell stated that originally, both Griffin Road and Orange Drive were supposed to equally share the traffic flow. He added that Cooper City reluctantly took on the burden by allowing Griffin Road to be widened, so that Orange Drive could be maintained as a rural road. The understanding was that the bridges

would facilitate local access into the Town. The abandonment of the Hiatus Road bridge warranted the need for the bridges west on Nob Hill Road and Pine Island Road. Mr. Farrell

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reminded that these bridges did not conflict with residential or commercial driveways. He felt that if the bridges were eliminated, it would impede the Town's residents from crossing over to Griffin Road. Mr. Farrell pointed out other commuting impacts the abandonment of the bridges would have on both the Town and Cooper City. He referred to the pending annexation of United Ranches by the Town and stated that the Cooper City Public Safety indicated that the abandonment of the bridges could severely impede emergency responses to United Ranches which could present a threat to public safety. Mr. Farrell stated that the governing body of Cooper City had not yet taken official action on this proposal.

Mayor Venis opened the floor for public comments and acknowledged Broward County Commissioner Lori Parrish.

Patty Hughes, 4051 SW 102 Avenue, disagreed with Mr. Farrell's statement. She felt this would negatively impact the equestrian community and cause more hazardous conditions. Ms. Hughes stated that she had never seen a traffic study done.

Susan Martin, 4150 SW 103 Avenue, felt that the proposed bridge was directly in front of a vacant residential property which would negatively impact any future owner who may want to build a house on the property. She felt that once Griffin Road was widened, a traffic study should be conducted to determine the traffic conditions and necessity.

Eric Draught, 4051 SW 102 Avenue, felt that this bridge would increase density and would negatively affect his property. He felt this bridge would negatively impact the rural lifestyle of the Town and was opposed to it.

Claudette Bonville, 11872 SW 42 Street, stated that the 612 Laurel Oakes homeowners were abjectly opposed to this bridge. She wanted to see the traffic on Griffin Road and not on Orange Drive. Ms. Bonville stated that residents of the Town did not want to live in a Cooper City environment and felt that Cooper City was trying to reroute their traffic onto Orange Drive, which was a rural road. She felt this would negatively impact Linear Park and indicated that her community was "totally" opposed to this bridge.

Joyce Steward, 10850 SW 25 Street, was concerned about the negative impact on Linear Park and the trail system there.

Dee Shapiro, 10770 SW 38 Drive, asked Mr. Ford if the intersection lighting would be installed whether or not the bridge was installed. Mr. Ford stated that the existing conditions on Nob Hill Road and Orange Drive would remain the same except the left turn for northbound Nob Hill Road. Ms. Shapiro felt that the Hiatus Road bridge was a better idea because it did not impact residential drives. Commissioner Parrish explained that the reason the Hiatus Road bridge was abandoned was because Hiatus Road was to be maintained as a rural road.

James Bateman, 10431 Orange Drive, expressed his displeasure with this proposal and was concerned that it would negatively impact Linear Park. He also felt the cost of the bridge would be much higher than the \$1 million estimate by FDOT.

Commissioner Parrish asked Mr. Ford if the Uniform Traffic Code allowed a traffic light to be placed within one-quarter mile of another traffic light. Mr. Ford indicated that this was a variance. Commissioner Parrish stated that if it was a variance, then it did not comply with the Uniform Traffic Code and it did not meet the safety standards of the Code. Mr. Ford stated the light would not be placed if the bridge was not built. Commissioner Parrish asked what an F4 designation was. Mr. Ford explained that it was a designation where a roadway was expanded

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and there were impacts to a park, it required the agency to prepare studies in relation to those impacts.

Commissioner Parrish asked if the mayor of a city requested an Environmental Impact Study, wasn't FDOT required to prepare one. Mr. Ford believed it was done during the original concept from I-75 to the Florida Turnpike. Commissioner Parrish stated that the Town had jurisdiction on the north side of the C-11 canal, specifically Orange Drive. She again asked if Mayor Venis had the right, by State law, to request an Environmental Impact Study, with or without approval from Council. Commissioner Parrish urged Mayor Venis to ask Mr. Kiar to find out what rights the Town had for an Environmental Impact Study on Orange Drive.

Linda Greck, 3121 SW 116 Avenue, explained her difficulties in navigating traffic when picking up her children from school. She felt that the additional homes on Hiatus Road would take Griffin Road east rather than Orange Drive east. Ms. Greck felt eliminating the bridge would preserve the area between SW 101 Avenue and SW 106 Avenue. She was opposed to the proposed bridge.

Vice-Mayor Paul spoke of the history on this issue. She indicated that a map she saw recently showed a median on Nob Hill Road that would be built regardless of whether the bridge was built. Mr. Ford stated this was not the case and it was not part of the project for the past eight years.

Commissioner Parrish reminded that both Cooper City and the Town had passed resolutions that Griffin Road would be widened and Orange Drive would remain a rural road. She asked Mr. Farrell why Cooper City residents would want to use Orange Drive rather than Griffin Road. Mr. Farrell indicated that Cooper City was concerned about the shopping center and the inconvenience it would create for the Town's residents, and the further bottleneck of traffic in that area.

Larry Davis, 10901 SW 42 Place, was willing to deal with extra traffic if it meant keeping the rural nature of Davie. He asked why a traffic study was being proposed prior to completion of Griffin Road. Mr. Ford indicated that the plan went back to the original plan and that once the road was widened, the bridge would not be warranted. He further explained that the plan to build the bridge could not be put on hold because once the Griffin Road project was completed, the connection between Orange Drive and Griffin Road would be under the jurisdiction of either "the county or the city." He further stated that the money that was earmarked for the bridge would go back into FDOT's budget. Mr. Davis inferred that, according to Mr. Ford's comments, FDOT was more concerned with looking for a project to spend money on than they were concerned with traffic flow.

Scott Spages, 3144 Peachtree Circle, indicated that he was a cyclist and felt there were not many places left in the County to ride. He stated that adding this bridge would be detrimental to the trail system at Linear Park and he was opposed to it.

Jeff Weiss, 4175 SW 103 Avenue, indicated that the original concept stipulated that the bridge would only be used by residents on Orange Drive. He felt that FDOT wanted the bridge to alleviate traffic on Griffin Road. Mr. Weiss indicated that the original plan was not being followed and this proposal was in opposition to the original intention. He asked how far west the bridge west of Pine Island Road was. Mr. Ford indicated the bridge would be approximately one-quarter mile west.

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Lance Jeffrey, a resident of unincorporated Broward County, asked how anyone could tell the Town what was best for its residents. He felt that the FDOT could not determine what was best for the Town and the residents had expressed their opposition to the bridge, regardless of the inconvenience. Mr. Jeffrey felt that FDOT was inconveniencing the Town for their own benefit. He expressed his frustration with the process and was opposed to the proposal.

Councilmember Starkey stated that FDOT had been very reasonable and allowed for a window of opportunity for the Town to make a decision. Mr. Jeffrey felt this was a waste of time and the canal, Orange Drive, and Linear Park should be left alone.

Toby Perkins, a resident of United Ranches, expressed her concern about the two traffic signals between Griffin Road and Tree Tops Park and added that it would be dangerous to children that to ride horses to Tree Tops Park and Robbins Lodge. She felt that the inconveniences that would be experienced by Albertson's shoppers would be small in comparison to the benefits of not building the bridge. Ms. Perkins felt that emergency vehicles had more than adequate access and putting a \$1 million bridge one-quarter of a mile from an existing bridge was redundant. She was opposed to this proposal.

Mayor Venis asked if any other residents had comments. Seeing none, Mayor Venis turned the meeting over to Council.

Vice-Mayor Paul felt that the existing bridges in place were used because people were forced to use them. She also felt that the bridges impeded the flow of traffic and were a waste of money. Vice-Mayor Paul felt that the "no left turn" signs created more problems than they were designed to solve. She felt the left turn signal on Nob Hill Road would be a better alternative than the proposed U-turn. Vice-Mayor Paul was opposed to the barriers at Flamingo Road and University Drive. She indicated she was opposed to this bridge and the bridge west of Pine Island Road.

Councilmember Starkey indicated that she was opposed to this bridge, as it would negatively impact Linear Park. She was also opposed to any other bridge so that the Orange Drive corridor could remain rural.

Councilmember Truex asked Fire Chief Don DiPetrillo and Police Chief John George to address the public safety issue. Chief George indicated that deleting the left turn access would increase the number of violators and would increase traffic. He stated that it would not restrict public safety. Chief DiPetrillo agreed with Chief George's comments and felt that the Pine Island Road intersection worked well.

Councilmember Truex agreed with Council and felt impacts to Cooper City were minimal at best and voiced his opposition to this bridge. He asked how this proposal could be stopped. Mr. Ford indicated that a public meeting and resolution from the Town were required.

Mayor Venis alluded to Mr. Ford's comments that once Griffin Road was completed, the bridge would not be warranted, and felt that this indicated that the bridge was not necessary. He stated that research was being done regarding removing Orange Drive from the trafficways and directed Mr. Kiar to further research the Environmental Impact Study for Orange Drive. Mayor Venis stated that he was opposed to this bridge, as it would negatively impact the residents and Linear Park.

Vice-Mayor Paul asked Mr. Ford to look into the feasibility of a pedestrian/equestrian bridge at SW 106 Avenue. Mr. Ford explained that the same process would be necessary as was

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for the bridge. Vice-Mayor Paul asked Mr. Kiar to research a pedestrian/equestrian bridge that would tie into Linear Park.

Ms. Bonville asked if the money could be used to build the pedestrian/equestrian bridge. Mr. Ford stated that procedures needed to be followed and this would create a different project.

There being no further business to discuss and no objections, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Approved _____

Mayor/Councilmember

Town Clerk